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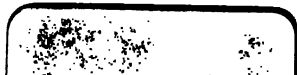
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JOTTINGS FROM MEMORY.

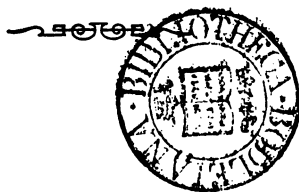


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JOTTINGS FROM MEMORY.

BY
A CLERGYMAN.



LONDON:
WILLIAM MACINTOSH.
24, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1870.

210. j. 371.

PREFACE.

THIS little book has been written, principally, for the purpose of bringing the "Mission to Seamen Afloat," under the notice of the public. This most excellent Society is conferring great benefits on our seafaring population, and deserves to be widely known, and cordially supported.

JOTTINGS FROM MEMORY.

It has occurred to me to write an account of my clerical life. I was a curate many years. I have filled curacies in various spheres. I have seen a great deal of human nature. My experience is wide. Perhaps what I have witnessed may prove interesting to others.

I shall begin with my ordination. A few days previous to the ordination Sunday, the candidates, who were very many, assembled in a large room. In this room the written portion of the examination was conducted, under the superintendence of one of the Bishop's examining chaplains. The "viva voce" part was conducted in an adjoining room by another chaplain, in the presence of his lordship, who asked questions at intervals. Having been prepared by a good course of theology, I only missed one question in the written examination, and none at the "viva voce." Having never

before been brought into such close contact with one of the chief rulers of our Church, I felt a little nervous at first. I was soon reassured by the kind manner of the examiners, and proceeded with great facility. Significant glances were exchanged between the examiners: I observed them, and felt safe. All the candidates passed; and on the Sunday we met in the old Cathedral. At a certain part of the service, the Bishop's secretary intimated to me, to my surprise, that I had been selected by his lordship to read the Gospel. This honour is bestowed upon that candidate who makes the best examination; and I was warmly congratulated by my friends. How I managed to get through the reading of the Gospel, I cannot tell. It was very like a dream. Had I received any intimation the day before, I should have been prepared: but on the other hand, the knowledge of the fact would have had a tendency to make me nervous. I dare say it was best ordered as it was. Thus I was admitted to the office of a deacon.

During the time my examination was going on, one of my brothers was undergoing examination in the College of Surgeons, London. My father received our letters on the same day. Never was father happier.

The incumbent of the parish to which I was licensed being in poor health, and there being an evening service in an outlying part of the parish, and no one to take it, I set off immediately; and in the evening of the Sunday of my ordination I conducted a full service.

The room was crowded to inconvenience. The people wished to see and hear the new curate. I shall never forget the scene. Everything seemed confused. With God's help, I managed to get through without a mistake, and the sermon made a favourable impression. It was a sermon that I had written with much care, but not such a sermon as I should desire to preach now. The doctrine was good, but the words were large and the sentences long and well-rounded. I have learned by experience that simple words and short sentences are the best scaffolding for a sermon intended to reach the hearts of the hearers.

From that first Sunday until the end of three months I preached three times every Sunday, and performed nearly all the remaining portion of the duty. It was heavy work, but God had conferred upon me good health and a willing mind.

The parish contained eleven thousand people—principally working men and their families. One

portion of it, having three thousand inhabitants, was placed under my sole charge. I laid myself out immediately to fulfil my duties as efficiently as possible. I visited all the people carefully and repeatedly. They received me kindly, and became much attached to me. The Sunday services attended by me were three,—two in the parish church and one in the room above referred to. My residence was situated between the church and licensed room—nearer the latter than the former. I attended the Sunday-school under my charge in the morning, and conducted the children to church. This Sunday-school and the parish church Sunday-school were well attended and highly valued. There was in the parish a Sunday-school for all denominations. This was also very well attended. Young women from eighteen to twenty-four years of age attended these schools. They never had a thought of leaving until about being married.

An outcry has been made against Sunday-schools, and some have even gone so far as to denounce them as failures. They may not indeed have effected all that might be desired, but I feel sure that the condition of the country would have been ten hundred times worse if the Sunday-school system had not been called into existence : and fur-

ther, I will now say that the Church of England's hold upon the people would be much weakened by an abandonment on her part of the Sunday-school. The people will send their children to these schools; and if the Church schools be closed, they will send them to the dissenting schools; and the habit of attending dissenting schools will lead them to attend dissenting places of worship.

. But it is not true that our Sunday-schools have failed. There are cases beyond number in which children have received lasting religious impressions in the Sunday-school, and in which parents have derived benefit from the Sunday-school training of their children. No, no; we cannot give up our Sunday-schools.

I opened during the winter months an evening school,—two evenings for girls, two evenings for boys. The number of girls attending was seventy-five, the boys about half as many. I taught all of them to write. After the writing they read a few chapters in the Bible. It was a very successful school. But I do not now consider that it came fairly within the field of a curate's labours. A clergyman's duties should always be of a spiritual nature. His chief business is to preach the Gospel,

publicly and from house to house. Nothing should turn him aside from that. If it be other work, let laymen be invited to co-operate : and in every parish laymen may be found willing to relieve the clergy of merely secular duties.

The congregations attending the various services were very good. We had no occasion to ask, "Why do not the working-men attend church?"

While residing in this parish, a circumstance occurred which made me think that a revision of our Burial Service would be desirable.

A tradesman died of delirium tremens. The incumbent refused to read the whole burial service at the grave. He omitted portions of it. The relatives were highly incensed, and threatened to report him to his bishop. They did not, however, think fit afterwards to do so, and we heard no more of it. But it led me to reflect upon that part of our Church Service ; and I came to the conclusion that a more general Service would meet in a better way all the requirements of the case.

There was a great deal of piety amongst this people. I remember the case of a collier—rough, honest Peter.

The times were hard, and work was scarce, and

Peter had a large family. Many a time when his wife, not knowing what to do, would sit down and cry, he would say, "Come, lass, I'll read thee a chapter out of the Bible:" and he would draw her to his side, and wipe away her tears.

But the time came that I should leave this parish. I left them with regret. They were sorry at my going.

My next curacy was in the country: it was a lovely spot. There was sea and lake and mountain within easy distance. There was a fine old church and a small village close to it, and a few small outlying hamlets, a few gentlemen's residences and farm houses. It was a great contrast to my preceding curacy. The population looking to us for spiritual guidance was about 1,000, 600 of whom resided in the village near the church. The incumbent had been for many years their spiritual overseer, and such a man it would be difficult to find. He was a rich Squire; he was a Fellow of one of the Colleges; he was a well-read classical scholar: but nothing in his mind ranked so highly as his office of pastor of this flock. For it he lived and moved and had his being. To win souls to Christ was his ruling principle. How he laboured!

how he toiled ! how he taught ! how he prayed ! how he preached ! how he wept ! If any member of his flock left this world in darkness his eyes found no rest that night : but pacing his room to and fro, he spent the night in agony. And then his conversation : he never spoke evil of any one ; he put the best construction upon every thing. I derived great benefit from my intercourse with him. He was a living example of kindness, gentleness, and charity. He had never married ; his sister lived with him. She was as good as he. She went in and out like a superior being, the guardian angel of the neighbourhood. Her steps were steps of kindness. She taught in the Sunday-school ; she distributed tracts, she visited the sick, she helped all who really stood in need of it. When any were sick she encouraged the relatives by timely gifts to take care of them. She was indeed a good Samaritan. She had a highly cultivated mind, and was well read in current literature. They are both gone to the land of peace and glory, but their name will be held in reverence for many years to come.

There is at the present time a great desire in the minds of some persons to introduce what they call the female diaconate into the Church. But what need is there for this novel institution ? Our

wives and sisters, our friends, have been devoting themselves for years to the duties that would devolve upon the deaconesses. They do it without vows, without a distinctive dress. It is done in every parish in the land: but introduce an order of women bound by vows, and paid, and the consequence would be that we shall lose the co-operation of those who in every parish are devoting themselves to the active service of Christ. None but inferior minds will take upon them vows and enrol themselves in a sisterhood. From what some advance one would be led to conclude that our wives and sisters have given no aid to the Church of Christ in these lands. In my opinion this attempt to revive what is called the order of deaconesses springs from the desire of ecclesiastical power that would bring all men and women to submit themselves to the control of Church rulers. It wears the cloven foot of Popery.

The duties required of me in this parish were light. The incumbent wished my assistance principally in the morning service. He could not with comfort to himself read the morning service and preach. He arranged therefore with me that I should always read in the forenoon, and that he would read in the afternoon. From this arrange-

ment he never deviated. There was an evening service in an outlying hamlet held in a room capable of holding nearly 100 persons. This service was very well attended. In the forenoon and afternoon a Sunday-school was held. A most intelligent and upright working man superintended it. This school was highly valued, and was very successful.

During the absence of the incumbent twice a year at Cambridge I discharged all the duties of the parish, but at other times my clerical duties were very light, and I had consequently much time at my disposal. I turned this spare time to good account. I got up at half-past four in the morning for a long time and remained at my books until one P.M. This course of study was of great service to me, and proved very useful afterwards, when, plunged in the unceasing toil of a large town population, I was compelled to be satisfied with a much less amount of reading. The incumbent was a very early riser, and my being one also gave him much pleasure. I remained in this curacy four years in all. During the first two years of my residence my mind was almost perfectly free from care and sorrow of any kind. While here circumstances occurred that confirmed me in my opinion that a

little careful revision would be well bestowed on our Burial Service. A man residing near the church gate was drowned while bathing on Sunday. He had been a very careless liver and an ungodly man. He had not for years been at a place of worship, and no one could have any thing but the faintest hope of his being saved. His body was brought to the church, and I buried him.

Another man, after a course of hard drinking committed suicide while suffering from "delirium tremens." A coroner's certificate ordering his burial was brought with the body, and the Funeral Service was read over him. But what hope could there be of his salvation ?

A youth in my Sunday-school class was drowned by falling into a tank. He was a good and gentle youth, one who loved the Lord Jesus, and I was much attached to him. His parents being Baptists the lad had never been baptized, and so he was not entitled to Christian burial. One of the churchwardens was his guardian. He talked the matter over with me. I did not then think it desirable to read the service over him : and to my great sorrow I was denied the satisfaction of committing him to the ground in "sure and certain hope of the resurrection to everlasting life." The churchwarden

behaved very kindly, and to obviate all difficulty had him interred in a dissenting burial ground not many miles distant.

Several years after the above occurred, I was walking through the parish in which I was then officiating, and after I had passed a house a woman came running after me calling me back, as she wished to speak to me. I went with her into her house, and when I was within she said, "Oh, sir, what am I to do! my little daughter has just died, and she was not baptized, and what can we do about having her buried. All the others have been baptized, but this one some how or other has been neglected.

Poor thing she was in great distress, I thought her heart would break. I merely said, "When a grave is ordered the sexton makes no enquiries as to the baptism of the person to be interred, and I never make any enquiry. I bury all who are brought without note or comment." We may conclude what she did. Now I have no scruple about burying unbaptised persons.

While I was filling the above curacy I was offered two small incumbencies. I declined both. The last advice given to us by one of the college

lecturers was not to be in a hurry to accept a small incumbency ; and upon this I acted. I was anxious to gain more experience and to spend some time in a large town previous to settling down in a permanent sphere of labour. When a clergyman immediately on his ordination enters upon a living and never removes from it, he in many cases becomes contracted in his notions and very often distrusts his own powers. Nothing sharpens the mind more than coming in contact with the masses of a large town. I was anxious to have the benefit of the experience to be gained in this way, and therefore refused the two incumbencies above named.

While filling this curacy a youth who was not "all right" became much attached to me. He came into the vestry to see me every Sunday, and opened a book and pretended to read. Sometimes I put my hands on him for a few minutes: this gave him great pleasure. For months after I had left he used to say "When is the other 'felly' coming back."

In this parish was a residence of one of our highest nobility. He was adored by the people, and no one more richly deserved respect than he. When in the parish his place in church was never empty. He and his family came without any

parade or pomp; they were never late. Their good example told beneficially on the people. Their kindness to all was great; many tongues had reason to call them blessed. His sons were creeping into manhood when I was curate of the parish. Since then they have all distinguished themselves. The congregation attending the church was large. Of all the inhabitants of the village there were not twenty of those who could attend who were habitual absentees. The congregation averaged 400. We had no reason then to ask—"Why do not the working men come to Church?"

I removed from this curacy with much regret. The cause of my leaving was the resignation of the incumbent. I loved the country, it was most beautiful. I loved the old church, it was grand in the extreme. I loved the people. I received from them great kindness. I loved the incumbent and his sister. They were never weary of trying to make me and my family happy. I loved the churchyard; in its eastern side lie the remains of a beloved child who appeared for a little time, and then vanished away. I loved that place better than ever I shall love place again. My residence in it was a bright seam in this life of sorrow.

My next move was to a town. I shall call it Eaglespond. After much trouble and expense we were all safely housed. I was offered the curacy of a large church in a district containing 10,000 people. I accepted it without inquiry, and flung my whole soul into the work. It was a glorious sphere for a man fond of work. There was a pious and judicious reader working in connection with this church. I commenced in company with him to visit the district. There were parts of it which I could not visit alone. There were a great many public houses ; a great many houses worse than public houses. A great many sailors' boarding houses, and two or three thousand Roman Catholics. Four days in the week, from ten to twelve and from two to four, we visited these streets over and over again, and often at night. I knew all the Protestants by name. I spent nearly four years here. I had, and I have, great reason to believe that much good was effected by the constant visitation. Many were induced to come to church, and many were brought to a saving knowledge of the truth.

Two instances of individual conversion occur to my mind. In one of the reader's visits he met with an old woman, and he induced her to commit this verse to memory,—“Cursed is every one that

continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." The words laid hold upon her; and owing to thinking, she was unable to sleep that night, or the following night; she said she knew she had broken God's laws, and was therefore cursed. On the third day she sought out the reader, and by God's grace she found peace in believing.

Another instance was that of a woman who lived in a cellar. Her husband had been a mast and spar maker, and all his life had earned between three and four pounds per week. He was a drunken man, and brought home only about ten shillings per week. She was an industrious woman, and supported the family by taking in washing. Hard work brought on a disease in one of her legs. After her husband's death her leg became much worse, and she was confined to bed. We paid her great attention, but apparently without any benefit resulting. We continued a long time, and just when we were about despairing of seeing any good accomplished I met the reader, and he informed me that he had that moment seen her, and that she had given herself to the Lord.

When I undertook the curacy of this church I

was ignorant of the special matters connected with it. It was a collegiate church, a monster with two heads. One was high ; the other was low. There had been much disagreement, but the differences were arranged, and something like peace prevailed. My incumbent preached in the forenoon, I preached in the afternoon, and the high churchman had the evening service to himself; and this was the only duty for which he was responsible. My incumbent soon after I joined opened the schoolroom for an evening service.

The forenoon service was fairly attended. The afternoon service was for a considerable time attended by four hundred people. This was considered a very good attendance for an afternoon service in Eaglespond; but after a time, when Confirmation was drawing nigh, my incumbent thought it judicious to catechize the children in place of a sermon, and this scattered the congregation. We could never after that gather together more than one hundred in the afternoon.

Some esteem catechizing very highly. It is doubtless good in its way; but after my experience of it in the church above referred to, I regard it as a poor substitute for preaching, and a plan not for

keeping a congregation together, but for scattering them.

The evening service in the school was very successful. The incumbent delivered several courses of lectures, all of which were well attended. The school was situated at the head of a long narrow street. There was not a house in the street from which some one did not come to attend this evening service. Great pains certainly were taken to induce the people to come. On every Friday I called at every house in the street to invite the inhabitants. It was pleasing to see the working people flocking in crowds to attend this service. We had no reason then to say, "Why do not the working-people come to church?"

The incumbent of this church was a very well-read man, and possessed of a great knowledge of theology. He was a man of a logical mind, and well skilled in the art of controversy. His preaching greatly delighted me, and gave me much instruction. He was deeply spiritual, and could find the glory of Christ in almost every page of the Bible. He excelled also in visiting the sick. He had a winning manner. I was much attached to him. I shall never forget my last interview. I was on the point of leaving Eaglespond; I think it was the day

before I left. I met him in one of the streets. We stopped and talked. He spoke very kindly, and with much sympathy. He commended me for the way in which I had filled his curacy. He said I deserved to be called a curate. We never met afterwards. As long as I live I shall give his memory a warm nook in my heart.

While filling this curacy I collected for the provident society. I induced many to save a little. One man, who advanced himself considerably, owed his advancement to this society. He commenced to put in a little; it kept growing until the shillings became pounds. One day, when walking through a street, he saw a notice of a house to let. He enquired the terms. It was a better house than the one he was occupying, and in a better street. The amount demanded for the "goodwill" was about the sum he had saved with me. He drew it out, and entered into possession immediately. His business greatly increased; when I last heard of him he had gone to a better house, and was in a thriving business.

Another man saved a little in anticipation of Christmas, wishing to have a goose for his Christmas dinner. He saved enough, but when Christmas

came he felt unwilling to spend in one day what he had taken so many weeks to collect, so he continued his savings until they reached a considerable sum.

After I had been at this church for some time the high churchman left it, and an old man came in his place. He was a vigorous man of seventy. His views were evangelical, and many thought we should have peace. He held particular redemption, and the other held general redemption and election. It is my opinion now that there should be no disputation between those holding these several views; they are only different roads for approaching the same conclusion.

The old man was very bitter in his language, and spared no pains to make his preaching personal. It was most uncomfortable. In addition to this the churchwardens took part against my incumbent. One of them was a very drunken man, and once came to church intoxicated. He snored during all the service, and when the service was concluded he was left snoring. I was greatly shocked. I hoped that one of the two incumbents would speak to him, but they did not; whereupon I wrote a kind letter—pointing out to him the error of his ways. In two days after I received an attorney's letter,

threatening me with legal proceedings. After this the wardens began to annoy me by circulating anonymous letters. A friend put one of them into my hands, and recommended me to communicate with my diocesan. I did so. He recommended me to leave the curacy. I gave notice immediately.

Who can think of this saintly man without emotion. Surely he was a noble bishop; how kind and gentle! how willing to listen! how judicious in giving advice! I shall never forget his kindness to me at this particular juncture in my history. I showed him the anonymous letter; I laid before him the correspondence I had with the suspected persons. He was grieved at the unkindness to which I had been subjected, and he advised me to leave. He was a very gracious man. He was holding a confirmation at our church, and after the confirmation the old sexton carried his bag to the cab that was waiting for him. When he received the bag he shook the old man warmly by the hand, saying, "God bless you, my old friend!" He is gone, and the old sexton is gone—to that land where there will be neither bishop nor sexton, but all one in Christ Jesus.

He was a good old man, this sexton: a great

friend of the Church Missionary Society. He had a small horn with a silver cover. In this horn on every Saturday night he deposited a silver sixpence ; at the end of the year it held fifty-two sixpences—the old man's contribution. This continued for years. At his death he left the society a legacy of ten pounds.

While filling this curacy I preached often in the open air : in the courts in our own districts, and in the streets. The town missionaries had established themselves in an open space near one of the markets. They were preaching one evening as I was passing—I remained to listen. When the meeting was concluded they invited my co-operation. I joined them on the following Thursday, and helped them for several years. They were earnest, pious men, with great power to arrest the attention of the passers-by. They avoided all controversy, and preached the simple Gospel. Their plan of proceeding was as follows : they began with a hymn ; during the singing of this a few assembled ; then there was a prayer, then a second hymn, and after that one of them began to preach. He was an old man, with a very venerable appearance, and very serious in his manner. He preached

with good effect for about twenty minutes. During this time the meeting had grown considerably in bulk. After his address another hymn was sung—and I began my discourse. It lasted about twenty-five minutes. After I had finished the other missionary took up his parable, and on until nine o'clock he kept up the attention of the hearers. Great good was done by these open air meetings. Many traced their conversion to them.

Some Episcopalians, and these pious persons, censured me very gravely for the part I took in this work; but, I think, unreasonably. When these men spoke, their doctrines were doctrines laid down in the Bible, and held by the Church of England. The Master they exalted was my Master. The Saviour they preached was the Saviour through whom I hope for salvation. The example they held up was Christ's example. They preached the same justification and the same sanctification that I had heard preached in churches; and, above all, God the Holy Ghost honoured their ministry by bearing many from darkness to light by their instrumentality. I could see nothing but good in the movement at the time; and now, after the lapse of many years, I think more highly of it than ever.

It was my good fortune to come in contact with

pious members of various communities. I frequently met with ministers of the Nonconformist churches. They were men of piety and learning, and I derived nothing but good from interchange of thought with them. Men called me a very low churchman; but I cared very little for the opinion of such narrow-minded persons. Wherever I can trace the stamp of the Holy Ghost, there I recognize a disciple of the Lord Jesus, and a member of the Church which Jesus purchased with His precious blood.

While filling this curacy a circumstance happened that excited my indignation very much. There chanced to be a dispute going on between the cabmen and the local authorities. The cabmen, through their missionary, requested me to speak at one of their meetings. I did so, and addressed them in a manner which I considered calculated to make up the breach that existed at that time between them and the local authorities; and afterwards I wrote a very long and temperate letter to one of the daily papers. It was inserted without hesitation. This letter was regarded unfavourably by some of the local authorities; and one of their number went to the editor and persuaded him to give up my name. With this knowledge in his

possession he turned to my incumbent and induced him to put on the screw. I was more indignant than I could express, and was on the point of throwing up my curacy, but my wife, a pious and prudent counsellor, who ever soothed and never irritated, persuaded me to take no notice of it. But it galled me inexpressibly. Liberty is one of the dearest gifts of Heaven to man. I felt this to be a great infringement of my liberty. I considered it to be a proceeding unworthy of a member of a public body. While filling this curacy, fever of a bad type broke out in one of our courts. It was a very narrow court. One could place one foot on the step of a house at one side and the other foot at the same time on the step of the opposite house without any difficulty. Into the rooms of the houses the sun never penetrated. It was always a dark and gloomy place. Here fever broke out: forty-six cases in six weeks. Every one almost residing in it caught it. I visited them every alternate day until the last disappeared. The deaths were not very many, all things considered. I brought the matter under the notice of the public medical officer; but I cannot recollect that any steps were taken by him in the matter.

There was a very large monthly clerical meeting held in this town. I became a member. But I do not now think it a wise step in a curate to belong to such a body unless he can make up his mind to hear and not to speak. Want of silence proved dangerous to me. It happened that one of the elder clergy read a paper on baptism. I was appalled at the hearing of it. It advocated extreme doctrine; and after it was read many names were called in turn, but all passed it. It seemed to me shocking that a number of Evangelical clergy should pass, without comment, a paper so contradictory to Evangelical ideas, and, accordingly, I delivered my judgment upon it. Now, mark the consequences. Some time after this I was candidate for a sphere of labour the appointment to which was in the hands of a committee, and the above-named clergyman was one of them. I enquired from the friend who invited me to stand for the post who were the gentlemen composing the committee. When he mentioned this clergyman's name, I told him the circumstance, and I said he will surely oppose me, which he did; but my friend mentioned the circumstance to the other members, and, instead of militating against me, it worked in my favour. I am happy to say, however, that during my connection

with that body he behaved towards me in a most Christian and gentlemanlike manner.

After having served this curacy for nearly four years, in the providence of God I removed to a church situated in a better part of the town, the incumbent of which is well known for his piety and learning, and his fame as a preacher. The facility with which he can explain Scripture is marvellous. Very difficult portions become plain and intelligible in his hands. I listened to his sermons with great delight. He had a most intelligent congregation, and large Sunday and day schools. The district contained more than twelve thousand inhabitants. There were many pious people amongst them. In no part of my clerical life do I remember to have seen more instances of people dying in the Lord. I visited all this district from house to house, several times. Nor was it in vain. I remember one case that gave me much encouragement. I had a conversation in a house with the servant; I found she was in the habit of going to no place of worship. I urged her to come to church, and to an afternoon class for women, held by one of the readers; she became a regular attendant at this class and at

church, and is now a sincere disciple of the Lord Jesus. There were two classes held by the readers on Sunday afternoons: one for males, and one for females. The reader who conducted the female class was a man between fifty and sixty years of age, but he looked older; he had been at the church for many years. He was a skilful theologian, and a very intelligent expounder of Scripture, and capable of preaching a splendid sermon. Upon several occasions I took the chair at his lectures—and lectures superior to them I never heard. He excelled also in open air preaching; he was incomparable in prayer at a bedside. Indeed, looking at him from all points, he was a man of great attainments, and had he belonged to any one of the dissenting communities he would have attained to eminence amongst them. He had had offers of ordination more than once from dissenters, but he would not leave the Church of England. Had he been admitted to minister in our church, working-men would have flocked in crowds to hear him. In his present position he is doing good work for his Master—perhaps we should be content with it.

But it has always appeared to me strange that a bishop will accept men of any kind from any

theological college—who may have but a bare sufficiency of the learning required at an ordination examination—and at the same time refuse to receive men who are known to be possessed of a large amount of theological and scriptural knowledge. In my opinion bishops should ever be on the watch for pious and learned laymen, and if they be willing, admit them to orders, whether they have acquired the knowledge at college or elsewhere.

This reader possessed more Bible knowledge than almost any man I ever knew.

This district was supplied with a large staff of lady visitors, who visited their district once a week, and they did their duty every whit as well as if they had been called deaconesses or sisters of charity.

I had not been many months at this church, when I was appointed to a sphere of labour in connection with the merchant shipping of the port of Eaglespond, but this appointment did not break off my connection with the incumbent. For a considerable period, when I had an opportunity, I assisted him in various ways.

Up to this period of my history I filled curacies, serving under four incumbents, and had no kind of

quarrel with my incumbent. I have heard frequently of curates and incumbents not being able to agree; but such never was my lot. When I took a curacy, I placed myself unreservedly at the disposal of my incumbent: did whatever he wished me to do, if it involved no opposition to my conscience; and by doing this I found it at all times easy to perform my duty as a curate without coming into unpleasant contact with the incumbent.

While filling this curacy, a missionary conference was held in the town. It was convened at the suggestion of one of the great merchant princes of Eaglespond. Missionaries from all parts of the world, to the number of about one hundred, assembled, and held sittings in a large hall, in the centre of the town. Mission societies of all denominations were represented. Missions in all their aspects were discussed.

From what I recollect of its proceedings, and from what I have read of the Pan Anglican Synod, this missionary conference was far more important in the gravity of its discussions, and I am sure it had a far more important bearing on the Church of Christ. The mayor for that year gave a breakfast to all connected with the confer-

ence, and if I remember rightly, Lord Shaftesbury was present, and made a stirring and interesting speech.

Following up some of the suggestions of this conference, a circular was sent to every clergymen of every denomination in England, requesting them to preach on a particular Sunday a sermon having special reference to the spread of the Gospel. I undertook to send the circulars to the Church of England clergy—and with the aid of several female friends the task was accomplished.

One of my volunteers remained up several nights, so eager was she to see all the letters despatched.

The incomes of all the great missionary societies have increased since then. I conceive that the increased zeal was in a great degree called into existence by the proceedings connected with this missionary conference. All the expenses were borne by a man whose praise is in all the churches.

The office of sailors' clergyman opened up a new seam of Gospel enterprise before me. Sailors had not, indeed, been uncared for by me prior to this time. I had been in the habit, when holding a curacy near the docks, of supplying each sailor I came in contact with, with tracts to take to sea :

but this office brought me into contact with men from all the countries of Europe, and from other parts of the world; and it revealed a system of iniquity to which I was hitherto a stranger. This system was known as the "crimping system." It consisted in decoying the sailors from the ships as soon as they came into the harbour, and fleecing them in every possible way. Riggers, boarding-house keepers, outfitters, shoemakers—in fact, tradesmen of every kind—were ever on the watch for poor Jack.

It is always to the advantage of the sailor to remain on board his vessel until she is docked: but the object of these men was to entice them to leave as soon as possible. The men who went by the name of "riggers" were not those respectable men who gained a living by fitting up the ropes on ships, although these were riggers by profession; but a set of men who gained their living by taking the place of those sailors who were decoyed from their ships before docking.

It depended on the size of the ship and the tide whether she could dock immediately on coming up, or would have to wait. If a large ship, and the tides were low, she might have to remain a week or ten days, or longer, or perhaps only a few days.

The object of the riggers was, to take the sailors' place in the ship and work her into dock. And for this they charged the sailors exorbitantly. It has often come under my notice that a sailor paid a month's wages to a rigger for taking his place during four or five days.

The means used to entice seamen from ships was drugged drink, of which they always had a supply. If a sailor took but one glass of it, he became unmanageable, and cared not a pin for any authority, and would go ashore at any cost and in spite of any remonstrance. Once gone, he was at the mercy of the boarding-house master. In a multitude of cases he would be kept in a state of semi-intoxication until his ship was paid off,—and then how could he check the account handed to him by the boarding-house master? Very often he learned too late his folly, when he found that there was very little to his credit with the boarding-house keeper.

The object of the shoemakers and outfitters was to get orders, and also to bring off the sailors for the boarding-houses, there being a regular understanding between these various parties. Outfitters used to give boarding-house keepers four shillings in the pound for every sailor's order.

I am happy to say that I knew some outfitters who dealt honestly with the sailors.

By degrees I learned the enormity of the crimping system, and endeavoured to counteract it in every way.

There is an Act of Parliament, a section of which inflicts a penalty on any one who remains on board a ship after having been ordered to leave by the officer in charge. I made this known to the captains of all ships boarded by me; and with good effect: a large number acted upon it. Some masters of ships were very resolute, and turned them off in a twinkling. Others could not cope with them.

The captain of a very large ship informed me that on one occasion a great crowd of crimps were on board early in the morning, when the sailors were washing the decks. He urged them frequently to leave his ship, but they refused. His patience being exhausted, he directed the hose to be turned against them. In a few minutes they were drenched from head to foot, and they hurried away as quickly as possible. He was never troubled by them afterwards.

I received great insolence from them, but I never interchanged a word with them. Once, when on board a large ship, I perceived a great many riggers in the fore part of the vessel trying to intoxicate

the sailors. I went to the captain's cabin, to ask him to order them to leave. He was occupied with very particular business, and would not be at leisure for a quarter of an hour or so. I went back to the fore part of the ship to wait. The riggers gathered round me, and began to use language of a most irritating kind and disgusting nature, hoping to provoke me to speak unadvisedly. I feel sure that if I had given them the slightest pretext, they would have beaten me.

Knowing the power of silence I said nothing, and thus gained a great victory, for after a time one said to another "Come away, there is no use in talking to him, nothing will vex him." I had the satisfaction of seeing all of them driven from the ship.

The following extract from my journal will show how ships are endangered by the conduct of the crimps. The second mate of the "Shaftesbury" informed me that this ship was surrounded by crimps on coming up the river. The captain threatened to use strong measures in case they attempted to come on board. This kept them off while the captain remained on board; but as soon as he went ashore they crowded on board and made the crew drunk. That night it blew hard

and the ship parted her cable. The mate ordered the second anchor to be let go, and then went into the forecastle to call the crew to give out the chain. But they were unfit for duty, being drunk, and the consequence was that the ship drifted on a bank and remained there until the next tide, until floating again she was in great danger.

Owing to the representations made time after time by the clergy maintained by this mission, the question of the crimps was brought under the notice of the authorities by the president of the society, who was also a member of the body, that ruled the maritime interest of Eaglespond. He took the matter up, had a committee of inquiry appointed, had many witnesses examined, and at length had the satisfaction of seeing a body of police appointed, whose sole business is the guardianship of matters connected with the shipping of the port.

I have been informed that this resulted in immense benefit to the sailors frequenting Eaglespond. Many instances of the manner in which sailors were robbed came under my observation.

A man returned from Australia with between £50 and £60 in his possession. Knowing that Eaglespond was full of danger, and that it would

be unwise to retain a large sum of money about his person, he handed a £50 note to his boarding-house master for safe keeping. As he lay in bed at night thinking over various matters, it occurred to him that perhaps he might as well have his money in his own keeping as leave it in the possession of the boarding-house master. Accordingly in the morning he very civilly requested that his money might be given back to him. "With the greatest pleasure," said the other, and he took out his purse and placed a bank note in the sailor's hand. The sailor opened the note, and perceiving that it was only a £5 note said, "I gave you a £50 note, this is only a £5 note." The boarding-house master flew into a passion, swearing that he never saw a £50 note all his life; and asserting that the sailor had only given him a £5 note. As the sailor had no witness to his lodging the money with this man he had no remedy, and was compelled to submit patiently to the robbery.

A mate and a sailor were seized with fever in a boarding-house. The master of the boarding-house sent the sailor immediately to the workhouse hospital, but retained the mate in his house. I was requested to visit the mate, and did so, but found him delirious, and it was quite useless to speak to him.

I visited him several times afterwards, and he was also visited by the readers of the district. He received more than an ordinary amount of attention. The poor fellow died ; and the day he died I went to the house. I had scarcely put my foot within the door when the boarding-house master swearing vehemently ordered me to leave his house immediately. I was perfectly amazed, for although a Roman Catholic, on former occasions he had received me civilly. In a few days afterwards I learned the reason of it. His wife's niece told my informant that he had neglected the poor mate most shamefully, that he had appropriated £40 and a valuable chronometer the property of the mate, and was afraid that I should ask unpleasant questions. He had him buried at the public expense. I had almost decided to give information to the police with regard to the circumstances of this case, but I considered it very probable that the young woman through whom I had learned the facts, would disavow her statement, fearing the resentment of her uncle, and his character was very bad.

The work for which I was appointed was to visit as far as I could everything afloat in the harbour of Eaglespond. To accomplish this, there was

placed at my disposal at first a gig and afterwards a cutter. Two men managed the craft. The men who were appointed in the first instance were inefficient, and I very nearly lost my life in consequence. By want of skill on the part of the steersman in one of the highest tides, I was driven into collision with a large coal hulk that lay at anchor. The boat was upset, and I was thrown into the water ; after being carried under this vessel I came to the surface, and understanding the art of swimming I floated on my back for more than a mile, when I was delivered from my perilous position by two men in a small punt who had put off to my assistance. Soon after that I was again very nearly upset against a projecting corner. In a little time I changed the captain, and engaged a man who had spent his life in boats. From that time forward I felt safe, having confidence in his skill.

He was a perfect master of his calling. The cutter in his hands became quite a different thing from what she was before, and my work became far more agreeable. He was most thoughtful with regard to me, and very anxious that we should accomplish a large amount of work. He was always ready and always willing.

In visiting the vessels in the river, the plan of

proceeding was this. To visit first the foreign-going vessels, then the coasters, then the river craft. In most cases I was warmly welcomed by the captains of the foreign-going vessels. I can only call to mind two instances in which I was refused admittance. The coasting vessels, Irish Roman Catholics excepted, gave me a very kind reception, and especially Welch coasters. I cannot speak too highly of the kindness and kindly feeling displayed towards me by the men on board the river flats.

Having succeeded in laying hold of a vessel and climbing her side, the first thing I did was to go to the officer in command, get his permission to speak to the crew, and to distribute tracts. Sometimes the captain would order the men to break off from work for a time, and gather together and listen to the parson. Sometimes I found them at dinner, and addressed them. This was a very good opportunity. And if it so happened that I could not speak to them in a body, I was always able to speak with them individually. Sunday was the best day for visiting the foreign-going vessels: inward-bound or outward-bound they generally were at leisure to hear a sermon on that day. On favourable Sundays when wind and tide answered

I have held short services on eight or nine ships ; reading and preaching and prayer made up my service. I read a passage, explained it in a plain and simple way, and concluded with a short prayer. If I perceived that they felt interested in what I said, I continued a longer time ; and if I perceived that after twenty minutes they were growing tired, I brought my sermon to a close.

I was once preaching to about eight men ; I had been speaking for nearly twenty minutes, and ceased. They were disappointed at such a short discourse, and one of them called out, "Take another text and give us another sermon." And I did so.

In the great majority of cases the sailors were much pleased with the attention paid to them by the agents of our Society, and expressed themselves in terms of warm admiration of those who supported this Society for their benefit.

That good was accomplished in various ways I can abundantly testify. All with whom we came in contact were warned against the abominations of the crimps, and a great many benefited by the warnings. Many were spiritually benefited by the sermons they heard. Many such instances came under my notice. One striking one was related to

me by a pilot who heard the man to whom it refers speaking on the subject.

At a Wesleyan chapel in a street extending to the docks, at the time in the course of the service when converts are invited to speak, a young man stood up and said he wished to make a few remarks. He stated that he was a sailor, and had been like many other sailors, a thoughtless, careless man, living in sin and disregard of religion; and that while his ship was lying at anchor waiting to get into the dock she was visited by one of the river missionaries; that this missionary preached a sermon; that that sermon had such an effect upon him that he became a changed man; and he stood up that day to tell them that he was a happy man serving the Lord.

I find the following in my note book:—

I was accosted by a mate as I was walking along the docks. He said he was a different man from what he was some months before, when I first spoke to him. At that time when I asked him if he ever gave any thought to the question of the salvation of his soul, he said his answer was that the only thing he was thinking about was how to get his ship docked. He now felt very sorry for what he then said, and begged to apologize for his

thoughtlessness; his thoughts concerning religion had undergone a change.

I can call to mind in my interesting visits, and many cordial welcomes.

The history of the crew of one ship has made a deep impression on my mind, and I will briefly relate it. I boarded a vessel called the Comorin immediately after coming up the river. I was very kindly received, but the crew were very busy, and I thought it unwise to remain. When they saw me leaving, the crew appeared very sorry to miss the opportunity of having a short service: as there was no prospect of their being at leisure that day, they invited me to come the following day. The following day was very wild and scarcely safe, but as I had promised I went and was greatly gratified. The crew to the number of about twenty-six assembled in the forecastle. They were as clean as men-of-war-men, and nothing could exceed their attention. We had a most delightful service; all seemed to enjoy it. After the service I learned the history of the crew.

They were shipped promiscuously at the Sailor's Home. When shipped they were neither better nor worse than the ordinary run of seamen. The mate was a pious man. When ashore he was a

member of one of the Seaman's Bethels, and was very useful in various ways. When the ship had been gone a day or two, he went into the fore-castle in the evening and read for the men. The men were much pleased, and consequently whenever he could leave the captain in the evening he repeated his visit to the fore-castle, and read and prayed with the men. This continued until the ship arrived at Calcutta; there he was attacked by cholera, and died to the inexpressible sorrow of the crew.

But his labours had not been in vain. Half the crew at the time I held this service had given themselves to the Lord. Six or seven of the remainder were inquiring concerning religion; and the remainder had given up swearing and bad language, and were striving to live moral and correct lives. This speaks for itself. It is encouraging to all who labour on behalf of sailors.

The tracts given to the crews of outward bound vessels were thankfully accepted, and I heard of many of them afterwards. Sometimes they formed the entire stock of literature contained in the fore-castle. I endeavoured to give every sailor a different tract, so that they might change one with another during the voyage.

The following are extracts from my journal :—

“Visited ‘Our Queen,’ outward bound.—Had conversation with fourteen of the crew. Met a sailor to whom I gave tracts last year. He had kept them very carefully, and informed me that all the sailors on board the ship in which he then was had read the tracts I had given them.

“Visited the ‘Daylight,’ outward bound.—A Sunday visit. Found all the crew sitting in the forecastle. One man was reading the Bible. I remained a considerable time. While speaking to them the cook called out to them that dinner was ready. I was going to desist, but they cried, ‘Go on! we do not hear this often, but we can have our dinner every day, praise God for it!’

“Visited the ‘Ontario,’ outward bound.—Sunday visit. The crew had left the cabin a few minutes before my arrival, where the captain had assembled them for morning service; nevertheless, they willingly listened to an address in the forecastle. They were attentive. The number was seventeen.

“Visited the ‘Cordelia.’ — Had conversation with a young man, one of the crew. He showed me a Bible his mother had given him before going to sea. He said that her advice and training came back often upon his mind, and kept him from doing things he was tempted to do. Another young man

had a quantity of tracts which had been given to him time after time, and which he had carefully preserved.

“Visited ‘Winged Racer,’ outward bound.—Was very civilly received. The captain collected the crew, and gave me an opportunity of speaking to them.

“Visited the ‘Nonpareil.’—I was very kindly received by the captain. He requested me to remain until dinner-time, when I should have an opportunity of addressing the crew. As dinner-time was near I did so and addressed twenty.

“Visited the ‘Bapthorpe.’—Had reading and prayer with twelve in the forecastle. When I had finished the captain invited me to step into the cabin. I had a long conversation with him on religious subjects. He was a pious man. While I was in the cabin the crew informed my men that what the captain appeared to be then he was always.—a gentle, pious, consistent Christian. They appeared much attached to him.”

In order to meet the wants of sailors speaking foreign languages I was always supplied with tracts in many European languages—Russian, Danish, Swedish, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese,

Italian, Greek, Turkish. I had also some Chinese and Indian tracts.

Sailors of every country (Irish Roman Catholics and Maltese excepted) evinced great pleasure upon receiving tracts in their own tongues.

I distributed a great many Italian tracts, and hope I have thus done something towards promoting a reformation in Italy.

I distributed a large number of Spanish tracts, and I hope thereby that I have done a little towards the diffusion of light in that unhappy country.

I distributed a great many French tracts, and am happy to believe that I have in some wise aided the development of the Protestant religion in France.

I distributed very many Greek tracts, and I am willing to believe that I have been in some degree useful in conveying to the members of the modern Greek religion some portion of that religion that was preached by Paul at Philippi, at Athens, and at Corinth.

That these tracts did some good I had evidence now and again. The following is an extract from my journal:—

“Aug. 6.—Mr. W——, pilot, informed me that in June last I boarded an Italian vessel, which was at that time in his charge, and distributed tracts to the sailors. The mate also received one. He read it carefully. It made such an impression on him that he could think of nothing else, even after he went to bed. He kept thinking of it all night, and in the morning he told the pilot that he could have no peace until he procured an Italian Bible, and read it for his instruction and guidance.”

I was walking through one of the docks one day, and was stopped by a man who informed me that a tract that I gave him a fortnight previously had been made a blessing to his soul. That tract was “The Life of John Bunyan,” published by the Religious Tract Society.

As it was in the foreign-going vessels, so also was it in the coasters. I was always well received, if we except a few Irish vessels in which the crews were Roman Catholics. It happened at times that a large number of coasters, windbound, lay in the river a long time. These afforded a wide field of usefulness; week-day and Sunday they received my visits gladly, and eagerly took tracts. I found

among the coasters many pious men; as a body they appeared a very well regulated body.

It remains now to speak of the river vessels. Between one or two thousand barges or flats were employed in the traffic of Eaglespond. These carried generally two men; and very often the captain had his wife and some of the members of his family with him. For years the character given by public opinion to them was very bad. Every kind of vice was attributed to them. What the publican was to the Jew, the flatman was to the seagoing population of Eaglespond. When I joined the Society one of the committee pointed out the desirability of seeking to evangelize these men. It proved most agreeable work. They generally lay in the river close up to one another in large numbers, a few hours before low water and a few hours after, at a time when they could be most easily reached. They gave me at all times a very kind reception. In their little cabin they willingly listened to the word of God. They were never unkind, never rude, never impatient. Quite the contrary; they were always ready to receive a visit and a tract. The evidence of success was more visible amongst these men than in the sailors on board foreign-going vessels or coasters: the reason

being we saw them oftener, and had more opportunity of witnessing results.

After I had been labouring amongst them for about two years, I heard on good authority that more than five hundred of them had given themselves to the Lord, and joined some church of professing Christians.

Now while I do not claim all this as the fruits of our Missionary labours for their good, inasmuch as other agencies were brought to bear upon them, yet, I think, I shall not err if I claim it in part as the effect of our missionary operations. I had many testimonies that God blessed my labours amongst them. But whoever may have been the instrument, good was accomplished.

The following are extracts from my journal :—

“One day when leaving a ship I observed a cluster of flats lying not far off, and went to them. The first man to whom I spoke, in answer to my salutation, said that he was as happy as the days were long serving the Lord.”

In another flat I met with an old man and his wife, both about sixty years of age. I spoke to them on the subject of religion. The old man said,

“Thank God we both can say it is well with us. Me and my wife are serving the Lord.”

From them I went to another flat, and stooping down I saw the captain, a young man, preparing dinner. I spoke to him, and in reply, he said, “He could praise God for His goodness, for He was bringing him to His kingdom.” He said, moreover, “We had a prayer meeting in this calm last night, and it pleased God to bring a poor sinner to repentance.

This young man was very intelligent, and was in the habit of going from flat to flat, reading for his acquaintances.

I went thence to another flat. The captain pointed to his mate, who was at the other end, and said, “This man was called out last Monday-week, and he is very sorry that he did not give himself to the Lord long before.

May.—Met with an old man on board a flat. He was a man of much intelligence and piety. On asking him if he were fond of reading tracts, he replied “That sometimes his eyes grew dim with reading; and his reading was often about murder. He said many people spent their time in reading the murders related in the newspapers, but the

murder he had pleasure in reading was that of Calvary.

This man had great powers of conversation, and evidently would have made a good preacher.

On another flat I met with a young man. He said, "People were anxious to get a good situation in this world, but he would prefer a situation that would last for ever."

The same day I fell in with a young man who interested me much. The Bible was lying open in the cabin. He said it was often used there; that the captain was a pious man, had daily prayers. As for himself, he said, he was like the young man in the gospel; moral, but yet not wholly given to the Lord.

Another young man said men should taste the love of Christ before they could feel its value; if they would taste they would find it very good.

The following in connection with my work in this field may prove interesting:

The first will exemplify the truth of the saying, "A work spoken in season how good is it."

A captain of a schooner in an interview with his owner, was severely reprehended by him under the pretext that the schooner was less profitable under his management than it had been under former

management (which however was not true), and the owner said, "It is all owing to your confounded praying."

The captain was much grieved and left the owner's office much distressed in mind. He had scarcely gone two yards when he was overtaken by one of the young gentlemen of the office, who put a scrap of paper into his hand, and on it were written the words—"Read Daniel."

This cheered the captain very much, and he went on his way rejoicing.

I was in the habit of meeting a respectable-looking old man every Sunday morning about the same part of the street. We met so often that we became on speaking terms. One spring morning when I met him, he pointed in admiration to a number of pigeons that were making their circles in the air. In reply, I quoted that passage, "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" And then I passed on. Next Sunday morning when I met him, he said that my words last Sunday had given him great comfort. At that time he was in great distress of

mind. The person who managed his house and shop was very ill, and he trembled to think what would become him if death should occur. But the text I quoted strengthened his faith, and enabled him to leave all to his heavenly Father.

An instance of the value of temperance came under my notice.

On one of the docks I fell into conversation with a mate of a coasting vessel. He informed me that until he was thirty-eight years old he was fearfully given to drunkenness. Whenever his vessel reached the port to which she was bound, he considered every minute an hour until he found himself in a public-house. Once here, he never left it until all his money was spent.

On one occasion, after he and a companion had had a long spree, his companion said, "Let us have another pint, and then have done with it." "Very well," said he. So they each had a pint; and he determined to have done with it. He never touched drink afterwards: he became a total abstainer. In two years he saved £50, bought a quantity of new clothes and a watch, besides paying all his debts. He continued to save until his savings reached £150. Soon after this the owners sold the

vessel without his knowledge. As soon as he heard it, he told them he was sorry that he was not aware of their intention to part with the vessel, as he would have been a purchaser. They said they had a better one for sale, and he could have that. He bought it then and there, paying for some shares of it with the money he had saved, and giving a mortgage for the rest. When I last saw him, he had paid off a considerable portion, and the schooner would soon be his own property.

Here is a story of an opposite kind.

A trader in Eaglespond had been very successful. Willing to benefit a brother, he bought a coasting schooner, and had her fitted up anew in all points, and then placed on board a cargo of coals, and made her over to his brother. The day she went out of dock, the brother, instead of being on board to navigate her, remained behind in a public-house drinking. The man who had charge was unskilful in the management of her; and in going down the river she went across a ship's hawser, and sunk like a stone to the bottom.

During the period of my being employed as seamen's chaplain, several times (by the invitation

of the committee and the captain) I had the privilege of conducting the service on board the Reformatory Hulk that lay at that time in the river.

It is a pleasure to me to call up the memory of this vessel. The commander was a polished and high-toned gentleman, full of love for his charge, and anxious to make them happy and do them good.

The appearance of the youths was such, that if I had not known beforehand I should never have concluded that they had been sent there for their wrong-doing.

The Church of England service was beautifully gone through by them. They sang as if they felt what they were singing, and during the sermon were most attentive.

The same boat's crew brought me off very frequently, and my interest in them became great; and had I remained in Eaglespond, it would have added to my happiness to be permitted occasionally to preach to the inmates of this Reformatory ship.

A circumstance occurred that gave me a favourable opinion of their seamanlike qualities.

I was leaving the ship after service one day, the tide running with great rapidity and the wind blowing furiously. We found it very difficult to

proceed, and had several narrow escapes. At one time I gave up all hope of being saved. My home and my motherless children came up before my mind, and I was sure that I should see them no more on earth. We were within such proximity to a great Transatlantic steamer, that one yard nearer and we were upset.

Whatever my feelings were, I retained an external composure : but as for the lads, while they knew the extent of the danger, not one of them showed the smallest token of fear. They were as cool and collected as they had been an hour previously in church. Coolness in the hour of danger is one of the chief requisites of sailors.

In reviewing the work I was privileged to accomplish in connection with the Seamen's Mission, I have arrived at the conclusion that there could not be found anywhere a sphere of labour in which greater opportunity exists of bringing the Gospel under the notice of sinners.

Each year I spoke to ten thousand seafaring people on the great subjects of sin and salvation,—spoke to them not in well-rounded, high-sounding periods, but in plain language such as plain people could understand ; and I distributed more than

forty thousand tracts every year. And I cannot believe that all this will be in vain.

I often think with pleasure of the passage, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters."

I left this work, having been offered the curacy of a very large parish in Workshire, in which owing to the delicate health of the incumbent, the curate has the pleasure of performing the principal part of the clerical duty. I did not seek the change; but having been offered it, I thought it right to accept. Two of my remaining three children were in delicate health, and I hoped change of air would do them good. It pleased God to take one of them, a most lovely girl, to Himself. She died at the early age of fourteen, full of grace and glory, rejoicing in Christ Jesus; but the other has greatly improved by the change. The parish contains 10,000 people, scattered over an area of nearly twenty miles. The rector was a most loving and loveable man. Unable by infirmity to undertake much outdoor duty, yet he helped much by his judicious supervision, his unceasing prayers, his never-failing generosity, to keep the wheels of the parish chariot rolling. There were three full services every Sunday, and almost always in addition

marriages, christenings, and funerals. The third service was held in a licensed room situated nearly three miles from the parish Church. All the services are well attended, nine-tenths of the congregation belong to the working classes. In addition to these there was an afternoon service in the aforesaid school room conducted by the reader, for the benefit of the Sunday scholar and teachers. This was highly appreciated, and a large number of the parents attended it. There was also a Sunday evening service in another part of the parish in a large room, a service held by another reader. This service was also well attended. On week days there were several services ; each reader had one or more cottage lectures. One of them had a prayer meeting every Wednesday afternoon in his own house, which was well attended. On Thursdays, accompanied by one of the readers, I made a missionary journey into a distant part of the parish, and held a prayer meeting from two to three o'clock in the afternoon. This meeting was attended by about a dozen women and one man. All the women with the exception of one prayed in turn. It was much blessed both to the conversion and edification of souls. From it much spirituality radiated, and a higher tone was given to religion

in that neighbourhood. Some may object to allow such liberty to woman, but as this is principally a meeting of women, I can see no valid objection to it. On the contrary, judging from its effects, I have no hesitation in pronouncing it to be very good. We distributed a very large number of tracts, all of which are thankfully taken. The men are for the most part fond of reading, and told me that they invariably read the tracts left by me. A large number of the men worked at home, and so I had frequent opportunities of conversing with them. I have heard the distribution of tracts ridiculed; and I can call to mind some strong language used by a Rev. gentleman on the folly of expecting working men to read the religious tracts left at their houses from time to time. There are no working men anywhere superior to the working men of the above parish in intellectual power. They are deep thinkers and close reasoners, and many of them tainted with sceptical notions, yet they told me that they read every tract left by me, and I am sure that when they said so they spoke the truth. They would scorn to say one thing to my face, and a different thing behind my back on this subject. I regard this as great encouragement for those engaged in tract distribution. If

they are readers of tracts I feel sure that the tracts will lay hold at least of some of them, and bring them to believe on Jesus as the Saviour of sinners.

Many instances of good done by our instrumentality, and conversions by the means used by us, occur from time to time. Not long since I was requested to visit a woman who was confined to bed by a severe attack of cold. She had often been spoken to by me, but as I thought with apparently little success. She was in the habit of parrying my questions with such words as these, "We have so much care and trouble in seeking to get on in this world that we have no time to think of the next." But when I went to see her I found her in a state of mind that indicated that my conversations with her had by the power of the Spirit been made the means of turning her to the Lord Jesus. I found her resting her soul on the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

A very remarkable instance of conversion took place a short time prior to my undertaking the curacy of the parish. A man who had been brought up in infidelity, and grown hard in infidelity, was brought to the truth. He was a very hardworking man, and had overworked himself and brought on a severe illness, which after

many months ended his earthly journey. The reader attended him very closely, and by degrees light entered his soul, and he sought and found pardon at the foot of the Cross. A few days after I had come to the parish I was taken to see him, and after a little conversation with him, he said, "If I were to begin my life over again, I would spin my cotton on a different jenny." He had tasted the wine of the kingdom, and was sorry that he had left it so long untasted.

The dissenters of all kinds were kindly disposed to the church. They married with us, and buried and christened, and they wanted me to speak at their public tea-parties. I am willing to speak in any assembly, if the audience are willing to hear my sentiments. I have reason to believe that this course of conduct has gained for our church much kindly feeling. Some, indeed, are offended at it, but I can never be persuaded that there can be anything wrong in uniting, for a good purpose, with those who love the great Head of the Church.

If it could be proved to me that the Church of England was so thoroughly and exclusively heaven-born that salvation could be obtained only in her, and that all beyond her pale were in helpless hopeless darkness so long as they continued in that

state of alienation from her, then I would rigidly confine myself to the members of the Church of England; but while the essence of Christianity is found in various sects of Christians, without any addition of error; and while the Holy Ghost blesses them in winning souls for Jesus, I will never cultivate any but friendly relations with Nonconformists.

In this parish there was for years but one church. It is in the centre of the parish, or very near it. There are hamlets, each containing several hundreds of people, at distances varying from one-and-half to three miles.

What would one church do for these? Were it not for the various little chapels in different parts of the parish, souls would have died in ignorance of the truth, who by their instrumentality have been led to embrace the Gospel.

No! I can bear no hostility to those who are working the work of the Lord as I also do. Indeed I am not afraid or ashamed to confess that I have far more sympathy with men of any denomination who preach the doctrine of the New Birth by the Spirit, and salvation by simple faith in Christ, than with those members of our church who lull their hearers to sleep by telling them that they are

made members of Christ in baptism, and that union with Christ is maintained by participation in the Lord's Supper.

I would far prefer to join myself, if necessary to choose, with dissenters who preach the everlasting Gospel, rather than with sacramentarians who bury the Gospel beneath rites and ceremonies. And I pray that it may please God to raise up among us some great master-mind to gather together into one the various bodies of Evangelical Christians that are now separated one from another. Oh that the time may come when it will be said again as it was said in ancient times: "See how these Christians love one another."

I have ever tried to promote unity among Christians, and will always endeavour to do so, God being my help.

In visiting the people some amusing incidents have occurred.

I called at a house: when I opened the door I saw a man with his back turned to me, engaged in brushing some cloth. He gave me a very rough salutation. "I do not want to have anything to say to you. Go away." I was much astonished, but said very quietly, "I am the curate." "Eh,"

he said, "Are you? I thought you were a quack doctor."

The people are evidently very much annoyed with itinerant vendors of medicine. In another house there was a deaf old woman, and when I said, "I am the *curate*," she immediately said, "Can you *cure* it? I am very glad. It has troubled me for a long time." She had a bad leg, and she thought I was proposing to sell her ointment for it.

They are a very sharp-witted set of people, and sometimes "try it on," as they say, with the parson; and sometimes the parson is a match for them.

I was holding a conversation with one of our parishioners, and happening to be in his garden he said, "Can you delve in a garden?" I replied, "When I was a young man I could do such a thing; but I have been out of practice for a long time, and I fear I could manage only badly." He said, quickly, "If you cannot delve in a garden you are not fit to preach in a pulpit." I made no reply, but began to speak on other topics, and after staying with him for a little time, I said, "Come preach for me next Sunday." "Eh, man," he said, "I couldn't do such a thing as that; I am not sufficiently learned to preach." I then said, "If

you cannot preach in a pulpit you are not fit to delve in a garden ;” and then I left him.

On another occasion a man said, “I could do your work as well as you or the Scripture reader. It is very easy. You have a very comfortable time of it—going about the country doing nothing but talking.” This conversation occurred up-stairs. When I came down I called to him, and said, “Do you say that you could do our work as well as we can do it?” He said, “Yes, that I could.” I then requested him to come down-stairs ; and when he was come down, I said, “As you say you can do our work as well as we, make a short prayer.” “I can’t do that ;” he said, and he went back to his work, cured of his vain-boasting.

Very strange things have happened at marriages. I have often read tales of things that were said to have happened in various parts of the country at such times, and I have no difficulty in believing them. At a marriage, when I asked the question, “Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife ?” the man said to me, “Wilt *thou* have her?”

The following incident was very unusual. There was a widow in our neighbourhood who was sought

in marriage by several suitors. She took some time to make up her mind ; but at last she did so. But having done so she was unwilling, for reasons she did not explain, that the rejected ones should know her wishes until some time after the marriage. Accordingly, on the day of the marriage, she did not come dressed in her bridal array. She came in her weeds. But objecting to be married in her weeds she brought the bridal array in a box, and in the vestry-room she decked herself in her marriage garments. I said, "Your friends will be astonished to see you going back in a different dress from what you had on when you left home." She said, "They will not see me any different. I mean to change again." And she actually put off her wedding garments, and returned as she came—in her weeds !

In this parish I met with an instance of the power of the Holy Ghost to change an old man's heart. Some persons speak in a way about the conversion of the old as if that was a thing too hard for God to effect. They look upon the conversion of the young, or middle-aged, as what we may fairly expect ; but when they consider the old, they limit the Holy One of Israel. Is any-

thing too hard for God? Can the power of the Holy Ghost be restrained? As the wind lays low in its onward course not only shrubs and trees of a few years' age, but also aged fathers of the forest, so the Holy Ghost converts not only the young and middle-aged, but also softens the hardened hearts of men and women advanced in years. This was the case with John Johnson. He was an old man bordering on fourscore; a weaver by trade, and hard-working. He lived by himself, his wife having been dead many years before I saw him. In the course of my visiting I fell in with him, and left him tracts, and conversed with him on religious topics. But I failed to induce him to attend any place of worship. He was old, he said, and poor, and had no suitable clothes. His health after a time began to fail, and at length he was confined to bed. During his illness he was diligently visited by the church staff. No impression appeared to be made upon him for a long time. He was evidently wrapped tightly up in a robe of self-righteousness. "I never did nout wrong in my life. I am ready at any time to appear before the Judge." Such was his habitual language. At one visit, when I spoke very plainly to him about his soul's welfare he became very angry, and said,

"I ought to be ashamed of my conduct, in seeking to thrust my religion upon him. Because he was poor that was the reason I troubled him. If he had plenty of money he would not be treated in that way, but would be more respected." He was very angry. I endeavoured to show him that I spoke to him so solemnly because I felt anxious about his salvation, and wished to see him in the right way. I then left him; and when outside the door I said to the Scripture reader, who was with me, "It is of no use to trouble ourselves any more about that man; he is as senseless as this clay beneath my feet." So I thought, but God thought differently. He had purposes of love towards him. A fortnight elapsed before I saw him again; and what a change! His first words were, "Since I saw you I 'tewed' hard for it betwint me and God, and He has pardoned my sins. I feel it here," he said, placing his hand upon his heart. His countenance was lit up with joy; and he now talked with delight about his soul and his Saviour. My visits after this were always most acceptable. He was never rude again. Some of his old companions called upon him, and said, "We hear you have begun a-praying." "Yes," he replied, "and if you would wish to get to heaven you must pray

also." He frequently talked aloud when by himself. His heart was so full of joy he could not keep silent. The fire was hot within him, and he could not be restrained. The neighbours wondered at the change, and often stood at his door to listen. He died in the sure hope of seeing his Saviour in His kingdom. The Lord can change the old as well as the young. He collects His people according to His own sovereign will: He gathers them from the young, from the middle-aged, and from the old. The wind that shatters the box and the myrtle can uproot and rend the oak and the poplar, and elm.

After having laboured here several years it pleased God to call me to the office of incumbent in a large and a populous parish. And in this parish I am now labouring. Already I have seen tokens of good, and I pray that our Heavenly Father will make me an instrument in His hands for the conversion of souls.

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